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**Introduction to the IRRPP Race and Sexuality Event**

**Crime and punishment: The Attack on Queer, Trans and People of Color, held on UIC Campus on February 2, 2012.**

**Author: Francesca Gaiba, IRRPP Associate Director for Research**

Welcome everybody and thank you for coming to this event, Crime and Punishment: The Attack on Queer, Trans and People of Color. My name is Francesca Gaiba, and I am the Associate Director for Research at the UIC Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy. I coordinate IRRPP's Race and Sexuality Series, which this year focuses on transgender, lesbian, bisexual and gay people. This is the first public event in the series, which is meant to help us reflect on the intersections of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, class and other identity markers, which are used to discriminate and oppress us, but are also the source of our beauty, strength and humanity. Understanding these intersections means recognizing that some people carry, on their body, multiple markers of beauty and oppression. I want to welcome and recognize all of you in the audience today who live that experience every day, queer people of color, people of color with disabilities, LGBTQ immigrants, trans people in the street economy, queer homeless youth.

I recently realized that doing intersectional work also means that, as members of an oppressed group, we need to pay attention to how our methods and outcomes affect other oppressed groups or more vulnerable members of our own group. For example, as white queer people we need to move away from asking the state for more police protection, tougher crime laws, and stronger sentencing for hate crimes, because these actions reinforce a criminal justice system that is notoriously violent, racist and sexist, as well as transphobic and homophobic. Because what is the gain in rising up when you push other people down in the process?

These and more questions are the reason why I am honored to introduce today's speakers, scholars and activists who engage in amazing hands-on work, who carry out and publish impeccable research, and who keep us honest about the human costs of the struggles we fight. **Andrea Ritchie** is a police misconduct attorney and organizer in New York City. Her advocacy, litigation, and organizing work focus on the profiling, policing, and physical and sexual violence by law enforcement agents against women and LGBTQ people. She has authored and coauthored a number of reports on these issues, for both national and international organizations. She was a member of the national collective INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, and is currently coordinating Streetwise & Safe, in New York City, an initiative that builds community and power among LGBT youth of color who experience gender, race, sexuality and poverty-based policing and criminalization. Welcome Andrea.

**Joey Mogul** is a partner at the People's Law Office in Chicago and Director of the Civil Rights Clinic at DePaul University College of Law. Joey's practice focuses on seeking justice for people who have suffered from police and state misconduct, police brutality and torture (especially by Chicago police). She represents people in court, she advocates through publications and in front of United Nations Committees. Andrea and Joey's book, co-authored with Kay Whitlock, is *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT people in the United States*. Welcome Joey.

**Dean Spade** is an Assistant Professor at Seattle University School of Law. He also taught at UCLA and Harvard Law Schools and has published extensively on issues regarding trans people and the law. Dean is the founder of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a non-profit law collective that provides free legal services to transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people who are low-income and/or people of color. Dean is currently the co-editor of the online journal, *Enough*, which focuses on the personal politics of wealth redistribution. His book is called *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of the Law*. Welcome Dean.

The speakers will each talk for 20 minutes, after which we will hear short remarks from **Erica Meiners**, Visiting Scholar in Residence at IRRPP for the current year. Erica is a scholar activist and a Professor of Education, Women's Studies and Latino and Latin American Studies at Northeastern Illinois University, where she is also a member of the union University Professionals of Illinois. Her interests, as reflected by numerous publications and awards, span anti-militarization campaigns, educational justice struggles, prison abolition and reform movements, and queer and immigrant rights organizing. She is currently working on a research project that examines how constructions of childhood expand the carceral state. Thank you for being here Erica.

After her remarks, Erica will moderate questions from all of you. After that, please join us for book signing and a reception. A number of great books, including *Normal Life* and *Queer Injustice*, are available for purchase in the back. IRRPP would like to thank today's cosponsors, the English Department, the Department of Criminology, Law and Justice, the Social Justice Initiative, and the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. I personally would like to recognize the work of our dedicated student staff, Delaina Washington, Rhoda Gutierrez, Iliana Figueroa, and Meg King, who make organizing our programs not only possible but very enjoyable.

Let me conclude with two important remarks: This would not be a trans event if we didn't take over the bathrooms.... and make them a site of resistance and gender neutral. This means that the bathrooms on this floor today are open to all people of all genders. One floor below us, the options are more limited. They only have one bathroom for men, and one for women. Finally, immediately following this event, please join us for another great event and reception next door at Hull House, for the launching of the 'zine *Hidden Expressions*, created for and by incarcerated transgender people, organized by the Transformative Law Justice Project, and cosponsored by IRRPP. Please join me in welcoming our three speakers to campus.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

I would like to thank all of you for coming and especially thank our speakers. I would also like to invite you to the next event in the IRRPP Race and Sexuality Series. On March First, at four pm, in this student center we are showing the documentary OutRage 69 on the issues of race, Stonewall, and the creation of a single-issue LGBT movement, followed by a discussion with our very own John D'Emilio of UIC and Precious Davis and Edwin Corbín Gutierrez, of the Center on Halsted. Please feel free to take a poster as you leave.

Enjoy the book signing and reception, and I hope to see you at the 'zine release at Hull House.